DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 299 553 CS 009 356

AUTHOR Ediger, Marlow
TITLE Student Motivation in Reading.
PUB DATE 88
NOTE 14p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; Goal Orientation; *Reading Attitudes; Reading Improvement; *Reading Instruction; Reading Skills; *Student Motivation; Teaching Methods; *Textbook Selection
IDENTIFIERS Reading Behavior; *Reading Motivation

ABSTRACT

Motivation is a rather persistent problem in guiding students to read well. If a student lacks motivation, a low energy level will be available for learning to read. Through motivation, a learner is encouraged to achieve definite goals in reading. Attention and retention by the student are important in recognizing new words whether the approach is phonics instruction, syllabication, structural analysis, configuration clues, use of picture clues, or identification of words through contextual situations. Numerous reasons are given for students lacking motivation, from poor teaching methods to inadequate reading materials. Reading teachers must use a variety of stimulating methods in teaching students, and the subject matter must be of interest to students. Quality deductive methods to motivate student behavior may emphasize a teacher modeling analysis, synthesis, and evaluation in reading. Problem solving methods should also be utilized to stimulate student reading. Balance among cognitive, affective, and psychomotor objectives should be emphasized. A quality reading curriculum needs much planning, with careful attention to vital objectives, relevant opportunities to read, and evaluation procedures. (RAE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED299553

Student Motivation in Reading

Marlow Ediger
Northeast Missouri State University

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Marlow Ediger
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Running Head: STUDENT MOTIVATION IN READING

CS009356

Student Motivation in Reading

Motivation is a rather persistent problem in guiding students to read well. If a student lacks motivation, a low energy level will be available in learning to read. Through motivation, a learner is encouraged to achieve definite goals in reading. Persistence is there to aid students in goal attainment with adequately motivated behavior.

Why Motivation is Important

Students who lack motivation do not pay adequate attention to ongoing learning opportunities. Chances to learn then are minimized. Later on, these students need to make up deficiencies from the lost opportunities to learn. If a student does not concentrate and focus upon new words in reading on the chalkboard introduced by the teacher, the chances are these words will not be identified while reading the related content. The learner must put forth effort and energy to view each word carefully. Attempts need to be made by involved students to retain the correct identification of the new words. Otherwise, new learnings will be forgotten before their implementation in reading required subject matter. It is the student that must do the learning and, in this case, learn to identify words correctly, as they are being introduced by the teacher of reading. Adequate motivation on the part of the learner is necessary to attend to and retain

identification of new words introduced by the teacher.

Attention and retention by the student is important in recognizing new words whether the approach is through phonics instruction, syllabication, structural analysis, configuration clues, use of picture clues, or identification of words through contextual situations.

Why Motivation is Lacking

Numerous reasons are given for students lacking motivation. Frequently, teachers are blamed for learners not being motivated due to poor teaching methods. This may be one reason. Teachers need to feel challenge covering the subject matter being taught. Enthusiasm of teachers might be reflected within learners. Thus, a teacher who enthusiastically tells learners what he/she has read and demonstrates interest in reading content, as well as in teaching reading to each student, may well encourage the latter to read proficiently. Certainly, a motivated teacher teaching students to read critically and creatively should have the enthusiasm reflected within learners.

There are numerous other reasons for students lacking motivation in reading. A variety of reading materials, including textbooks, library books, and other print materials must be available for learners to provide for individual differences. It certainly is not motivating for learners if the subject matter

read is too complex or excessively easy. Each student needs to be ready for reading specific subject matter. Readiness factors to motivate students to read include having ample opportunities to see new words in print, attach meaning to each new word, have adequate background information, as well as have a purpose (reason) to read, prior to reading the involved subject matter. Motivation to read may be lacking due to students lacking readiness factors.

Subject matter to be read should be of interest to students. A lack of interesting reading materials can make for inappropriate motivation. With interest in subject matter being read, students possess a high energy level for reading. Motivation is inherent when each student is interested in reading the involved subject matter.

Reading teachers must use a variety of stimulating methods in teaching students. To learn inductively on the part of students, the teacher needs to ask challenging questions covering content read. Each question needs to be on the understanding level of students. Questions to motivate students need to lead to higher levels of thinking, such as the levels of analysis (separating facts from opinions, fantasy from reality, accurate from inaccurate content, as well as detecting bias, glittering generalities, and card stacking), synthesis (hypothesizing),

and evaluation (appraising subject matter read in terms of quality criteria).

Quality deductive methods to motivate student behavior may emphasize a teacher modeling analysis, synthesis, and evaluation in reading. Motivated students apply what has been learned pertaining to higher levels of cognition.

Problem solving methods should also be utilized to stimulate student reading. Here, students with teacher guidance identify stimulating problems or broad questions. Information is gathered through reading and the use of audiovisual materials. A hypothesis is tested in action and revised if necessary. Problem solving methods are good to utilize when students select interesting problems pertaining to subject matter read. A variety of reading materials and nonreading activities assist in data gathering, as well as in checking hypotheses. Critical and creative thinking are emphasized in true problem solving experiences. Problems identified are new to involved students. Challenge is involved in choosing learning opportunities to solve the identified problems. If the same methods are utilized continuously, students will tend to dislike reading. Problems identified by students with teacher guidance integrate interest with effort. Interest provides for effort in learning. Motivation is then present.

Balance among cognitive, affective, and psychomotor objectives should be emphasized in teaching reading. A single domain of objectives, such as cognitive is not adequate. The development of the intellect (cognition) is significant in the teaching of reading. Students then need to learn to achieve skills in reading to follow directions, skim, or scan, develop sequence in ideas, as well as achieve main ideas and generalization. Analyzing what has been read and achieving unique ideas covering subject matter ideas are further relevant cognitive goals. Affective objectives, however, stimulate students to do well in the cognitive domain.

The affective dimension of objectives is equally important as compared to the cognitive domain. With desirable affective objectives, students learn to select and enjoy quality literature. When ready, a learner then enjoys characterization, setting, plot, irony, and theme of literature read. An individualized reading program needs to be in evidence in which the student feels motivated by selecting the title and achievement level of the library book. Hopefully, challenging library books will be selected by the learner. The teacher in a conference with the student needs to encourage, not force, increased interest in reading. Fascinating questions raised by the teacher and the student can be discussed within the conference setting. Evaluation of the success of each conference would emphasize students

doing more reading and appreciating subject matter content.

The psychomotor level of objectives should receive adequate attention in the reading curriculum to motivate student learning. With psychomotor goals, students develop proficiency in using the gross and finer muscles, as well as skill in eye-hand coordination. Numerous fascinating learning opportunities can be stressed by the teacher in the psychomotor domain. Thus, after reading content from basal textbooks or through an individualized reading program, learners may complete stimulating projects to reveal comprehension. These projects include

1. developing a mural or pencil sketching.
2. making a diorama.
3. creating a pantomime or creative dramatics presentation.
4. completing a movie set, showing illustrated scenes of subject matter read.
5. writing a different beginning or ending for the story with accompanying illustrations.
6. constructing a model relating directly to ideas contained in a story or reading selection.

Teachers of reading then need to have students attain balance among cognitive, affective, and psychomotor objectives. Each objective needs to stress encouragement and motivation for learning.

Students may lack motivation in reading due to a lack of

meaningful learning. The reader needs to relate the self to the selection being read. The reading teacher must make certain that students understand subject matter. Students who do not read well enough to benefit from the reading of the textbook need assistance. A good reader could orally read the contents to the disabled reader as the latter follows along in his/her book. If not overdone as a method, this can be challenging to both students. The disabled reader can then learn to identify words in the process as well as listen to the ideas read. Attaching meaning to the subject matter listened to is then possible. Motivation to read new materials may be a relevant end result. Gifted/talented readers need to read challenging materials; otherwise a lack of meaning is not possible when subject matter is boring and lacks maturity. These learners must be assisted to achieve optimally. This will be well above the grade level they are presently in. If a student with eighth or ninth grade reading abilities is asked to utilize textbooks written for fifth graders, it is no wonder that motivation to read is lacking. Or a fifth grader, reading on the second grade level, will lack motivation to read content written for average achievers in grade five.

The key to successful reading achievement of students is to match their present level of attainment with materials of

instruction that are meaningful and possess challenge.

Recommendations to Improve the Reading Curriculum

Numerous recommendations have been made by experts to improve reading skills on the part of students. The writer would like to recommend definite quality criteria to assist students to achieve more optimally in reading.

First of all, with the accountability movement in vogue, basic essential skills for students have been identified on the state or local school level. These skills are generally listed as behaviorally stated objectives. The reading curriculum then becomes fragmented. Each student needs to attain these sequential precise ends. Too much time by the reading teacher needs to be spent on having learners achieve each behaviorally stated objective. Little time may be available to have students read subject matter in a holistic approach. Learning of isolated skills becomes relevant, rather than reading sequential ideas in order to learn. Certainly, comprehension of quality literature must be the end result, rather than acquiring isolated reading skills. Enjoying literature read should be a true motivator for students.

Secondly, the writer recommends that students have a greater voice in determining which sources to read from and which problem areas to solve, involving the processes of reading. Student-teacher planning of goals, experiences, and appraisal

procedures emphasizes a sound philosophy of education. Interest of student provides for effort in learning. Motivation is then present in the learning opportunities.

Thirdly, motivated, well educated and trained teachers should be able to make good decisions in terms of providing for individual differences in reading. With state mandated objectives or local district instructional management systems (IMS), decision making by the reading teacher is minimized. Certainly, a quality motivated teacher should be able to determine scope and sequence better than can be done on the state or district wide level. Each teacher, regardless of age level of students taught or academic area taught, must be a teacher of reading. The making of decisions by the teacher may become a motivator in and of itself. This enthusiasm is reflected within learners.

Fourthly, state certification departments need to require in teacher preparation programs that all prospective teachers have adequate course work in the teaching of reading. Schools of education preparing teachers need to be certain that all have demonstrated proficiency in the teaching of reading. Teachers need to possess adequate knowledge and skill in teaching word recognition techniques and diverse kinds of comprehension skills to develop within students. A love for the teaching of reading and an ability to motivate students is a must in teacher education programs.

Fifthly, teachers need to stimulate students to enjoy and appreciate reading. It is a blessing to be a good reader. Nonreaders or those limited in the ability to read suffer grave consequences in society. The level of job attainment is lowered if an adult can not read at a required proficient level. Enjoyment of life is minimized due to not possessing needed skills in reading. Too frequently, the student and parents do not appreciate the opportunities to learn. Opportunities to learn involve the skill of reading.

Sixthly, teachers need to stimulate students to move to higher cognition levels, as compared to rote learning and drill experiences. Students should experience needed drill and practice in reading subject matter. However, life itself demands that learners be skillful in problem solving situations. Reading of content provides opportunities to students with teacher assistance to identify vital problems, gather related data and achieve answers to each problem. The ability to motivate students to higher levels of cognition is a must for the teacher.

Seventhly, students should experience life vicariously. It is impossible to experience, in many situations, desirable situations in life. Through reading or vicariously, learners may experience what is good, true, and beautiful. Undesirable situations in life are costly to experience directly. With vicarious experiences in reading, what is undesirable can be

experienced in a relatively harmless manner. Learners need to be motivated to experience life vicariously.

In closing, a quality reading curriculum needs much planning. Careful attention to vital objectives, relevant learning opportunities to read, and important evaluation procedures can truly make for a quality reading curriculum. Hopefully, students will be motivated to read with quality planning in evidence from the teacher.

Selected References

Alexander, J. Estill (Editor), Teaching Reading. Second edition. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1983.

Davis, Gary A. Educational Psychology. New York: Random House, 1983.

Harris, Albert, and Edward Sipay. How to Increase Reading Ability. Eighth edition. New York: Longman, Inc., 1985.

Ringler, Lenore H., and Carol K. Weber. A Language-Thinking Approach to Reading. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984.

Rubin, Dorothy. Diagnosis and Correction in Reading Instruction. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982.